

Question #2

There is dangerous revival of militancy in KP and Balochistan. Critically evaluate the reasons and give recommendations.

1, Introduction

Militancy has remained one of the persistent issues in Pakistan, unfortunately grappling the country's overall progress. The Global Terrorism Index has placed Pakistan on 2nd rank in the terrorism index. The report clearly depicts the grim state of militancy in the country. The most prone areas of militancy are KP and Balochistan. And the dangerous revival of militancy in these provinces is due to porous Afghan border, the external interference, socio-economic deprivation, and weak governance.

However, the pathways to tackle the militancy in these provinces include engaging in dialogue with local leaders, strengthening Afghan border management, ensuring economic equalities, and providing basic facilities to the locals. Hence, all these will address the root causes of militancy and ultimately curb it.

2) Current situation of militancy in KPK and Balochistan

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KPK

63% surge in militancy
with 1616 fatalities

Balochistan

31% of terror related
incidents leading to
782 deaths

3) Causes of militancy in KP and Balochistan

3-1) Porous Pak-Afghan border giving space to militants infiltration

To begin with, the first reason behind revival of militancy in KP and Balochistan is the porous Afghan border. This porous border allow militants infiltration and supply of weapons in the country.

The spokesperson of ISPR has time and again highlighted that Afghanistan is providing safe havens to the militants who infiltrate to Pakistan through Pak-Afghan border.

3.2, The socio-economic deprivation of the provinces

Next, the decreasing socio-economic condition in these provinces compelled people to turn against the state and advance on the path of militancy to ensure their survival.

For example, as per UNDP report, the HDI of Balochistan is in line of Sierra Leone which is 182 out of 189 countries.

Thus, with such poor HDI, the socio-economic conditions become bleak, turning people towards militancy.

3.3, Political marginalization and grievances of the locals

In addition, the locals of these provinces also lack political representation, causing their political marginalization and leaving their grievances unaddressed. This consequently give surge to militancy in the provinces as people rebel against the state to get their fundamental rights.

3.4, Increasing external interference

Going down the ladder, the external involvement of countries like India in militant attacks has also led to the revival of militancy in the KP and Balochistan.

Examples like EU Disinformation Lab Report related Indian involvement in Pakistan and Kalbushan Xadav Case are the glaring illustrations of external involvement in rising militancy in these provinces.

3.5, Unequal distribution and exploitation of the resources

Moreover, the unequal distribution and exploitation of resources in these provinces have turned inhabitants against the state, claiming to get their rights through violence.

For example, Balochistan only get 12 per cent royalty on Sui Gas, least in the whole world.

So, such exploitation and unequal distribution drag people towards militant tendencies because of sense of deprivation in their minds.

3.6, Radical interpretations of religion

To add more, the religion factor in these provinces also play part in the revival of militancy in these provinces as people usually misinterpret religion and present radicalize views, turning people towards militancy.

For example, Afghan Jihad is the clear precedent in this regard.

Thus, the radical misinterpretation of religion to gain vested interests led to revival of militancy.

3.7, Weak governance making civil institutions dysfunctional

Furthermore, weak governance structure in these provinces makes civilian institutions like police and levies dysfunctional due to lack of resources and funding.

As Akber S. Zaidi writes, "Weak institutions provide space to militant organizations to thrive and grow stronger."

So, the dysfunctionality of these institutions due to weak governance has revived militancy in KP and Balochistan.

3.8) Security centric approach creating feeling of alienation

Last but not least, the security centric approach of the state towards these provinces creates a feeling of alienation among people, which ultimately give birth to extremist tendencies in their brain towards the state. To put simply, such security centric approach fuels the revival of militancy in KP and Balochistan.

4) Chalking The wayouts for tackling militancy in KP and Balochistan

4.1) Engage in dialouge with local leaders

First, the state need to engage in dialouge with the local leaders to address their greivances and showing strong commitment to address them. This will create a sense of satisfaction in the people of these provinces, ultimately dragging them away from militancy.

Initiative like Baloch Reconilation Packages can relieve the situation.

4.2) Ensure economic equality

Moreover, ensuring economic equality can be proved as a panacea to fuelling militancy in KP and Balochistan.

For this, the government must provide equal opportunities to locals in CPEC and other economic related projects in these provinces and providing them jobs.

In this way, militancy can be controlled in these areas.

4.3) Provide basic facilities like education and healthcare

Additionally, providing basic and fundamental facilities to the people of these provinces can address the militancy issue as people will get basic facilities and will not turn towards militant tendencies.

For example, implementing the Sehat Card and Teach For Pakistan like initiatives can fulfil the basic requirements of health and Education in the provinces.

4.4, Strengthen Afghan border management

To add more, strengthening of Afghan border is the need of the hour to address the militancy issue in KP and Balochistan.

As Afghan border touches these two provinces, influx of militants and weapons automatically increases.

Catalyzing the fencing process of the border and installing modern surveillance tools can control militant infiltrations from Afghan border.

4.5, Empower civilian institutions by providing funds and resources

Finally, militancy can be tackled if civilian institutions are empowered.

With proper training and capacity building programmes, these institutions can nip the evil of militancy in the bud and save millions of lives before any militant attacks through proper planning and intelligence.

5, Conclusion

To conclude, the long-standing issue of Pakistan has become a bottleneck

in its development. And its dangerous revival has further aggravated the situation. The reasons behind this revival includes porous Afghan border, weak governance, socio-economic deprivation, and external involvement.

But by strengthening Afghan border, empowering civilian institutions, and engaging in dialogue with local leaders, militancy can be grappled and tackled timely.

Question #1

1) Introduction

The Formation of new provinces has surfaced time and again on the table of policy makers of Pakistan. However, there are various hurdles due to which the formation of new provinces can not be fulfilled. These hurdles include constitutional rigidity, political resistance, huge fiscal cost, and risk of increase in public expenditures. Having said that, these hurdles can be resolved by building political consensus, ensuring fiscal sustainability, strengthening local governments, and empowering administrative units before provincehood.

"Formation of new provinces is not panacea to the woes of Pakistan, but empowering local government can address these woes."

~ Dr. Ishrat Hussain

2) Hurdles in way of formation of new provinces

2.1) Constitutional rigidity as impediment

To start with, the foremost hurdle in the formation of new provinces in Pakistan is constitutional rigidity regarding new provinces.

The Article # 237 of the constitution requires $\frac{2}{3}$ rd majority of Provincial Assembly of the province that is going to divide and form new province. Other than that, it also requires $\frac{2}{3}$ rd majority both from National Assembly and Senate.

2.2) Resistance of political parties

Next, resistance of political parties is also significant roadblocks in creating new provinces in the country. As formation of new provinces will ultimately compromise the vested interests of these parties.

For instance, PPP and PMLN have strong voter banks in Sindh and Punjab respectively.

So, with formation of new provinces, these parties will lose their political cult, therefore showing resistance towards formation of new provinces.

2.3, Huge fiscal cost

Besides, the huge fiscal cost of formation of new provinces is hindrance in its way Pakistan, with such dwindling economy, would not be able to fulfil the demands of all the newly formed provinces. It will consequently lead to centre - province disputes and condition of political unrest and uncertainty in the country.

2.4, The problem of dividing assets and liabilities

Moreover, the division of assets and liabilities when new provinces will form can become cause of tensions in the country, causing hurdles in formation of new provinces.

For example, consider the instances of 1991

Water Accord and Water Under Indus

River System, they already cause inter-provincial

issues on such assets.

Therefore, with formation of new provinces, these assets will further divide that would lead to more conflicts between the provinces.

2.5, Risk of rising public expenditure

Additionally, the risk of public expenditure also creates hurdle in the formation of new provinces in Pakistan.

For instance, every new province formed will need a separate assembly, governor, ministries, and other resources.

Hence, to meet these demands, public expenditure will automatically surge, which will cause stress on national economy.

2.6, Issue of unequal provincial development

Furthermore, issue of unequal provincial development also creates hurdle in the formation of new provinces. As newly formed provinces will not be equally development, the conflict will automatically arise between the provinces to get more resources for development.

The consequences of unequal provincial development are seen in Balochistan.

So, with formation of new provinces, the consequences will become two folds.

2.7) The problem of restructuring administration and bureaucratic burden

Lastly, the ^{existing} provinces are already grappling with administrative and bureaucratic issues. So, for new provinces it will become more difficult.

The administrative restructuring and bureaucratic burden causes roadblock in the formation of new provinces in Pakistan, especially when the country has already some much is on its plate to sort out.

3, Recommendations for formation of new provinces as materialized reality

3.1) Strengthening local governments

First, before making new provinces, it is necessary to strengthen local governments. In this way, local problems will be resolved through local solutions, and the need of formation of new provinces will ultimately diminish.

Local Government Model of the UK is best illustration in this regard.

3.2) Ensure financial stability

Likewise, to make new provinces, financial stability is the key requirement. Without proper economy, the state will not be able to fulfill the demand of new provinces.

Such as, Indian formed new provinces when it has achieved enough financial sustainability to bear the burden of these provinces.

So, Pakistan can also follow the suite.

3.3) Empower administrative units before provincehood

To add more, strong administrative units are the lifeline of thriving and flourishing provinces. Therefore, before formation of new provinces it is an imperative to empower administrative units. These strong administrative units will resolve the issues of already existing provinces and make them self-reliant.

3.4, Ensure proper decentralization

In addition, proper decentralization is quite essential for the formation of new provinces. Without proper devolution of powers, the provinces can not perform well and meet their demand.

So, implementation of Article # 140(A) in letter and true spirit is need of the hour as far as formation of new provinces are concerned.

3.5, Build political consensus

To wind up, building political consensus is necessary for formation of new provinces. Without it, the 2/3rd majority of Provincial and National Assembly for province formation can not be ensured. Therefore, it is necessary to build a political unit on the notion of formation of new provinces only then new provinces can be formed.

4) Conclusion

In a nutshell, formation of new provinces is recurring debate in Pakistan. But there are certain hindrances, like constitutional rigidity, political resistance, risk of rise in public expenditure, and huge fiscal cost, that do not allow new provinces to be formed in Pakistan. However, with recommendations, such as strengthening local government, ensuring decentralization, and ensuring financial sustainability, these hurdles can be overcome in way of formation of new provinces.

